

UNITED STATES ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY  
WASHINGTON

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OFFICE OF  
THE DIRECTOR

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MEMORANDUM FOR JOHN A. McCONE, DIRECTOR,  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

SUBJECT: Request for Declassification  
of Seismic Data

The purpose of this memorandum is to request the declassification of data regarding the detection and identification of seismic events in the Soviet Union by the U.S. Atomic Explosion Detection System over the five-year period 1958-1962. The Arms Control and Disarmament Agency believes that the declassification of these data is needed for the following reasons:

1) It would show that the United States already has in existence a considerable capability to detect and identify seismic events in the Soviet Union and that, therefore, U.S. estimates of our capability to verify a nuclear test ban agreement are not based on theoretical assumptions but are based on solid experience.

2) It would show that the United States has increased its capability throughout this five-year period to identify seismic events in the Soviet Union by a distant network of stations and that, therefore, primary reliance to monitor a test ban agreement can be placed on such a system or a system of comparable characteristics.

3) It would, we believe, give increased confidence to the public that the verification system now being proposed by the United States to monitor a test ban agreement is adequate.

State Dept. review completed

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GROUP 4

Downgraded at 3-year intervals.

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The declassified data that we are seeking would not include information on the number of stations in the U.S. detection system nor their location. We would only wish to present to the public the results of the system's detection and identification capabilities. Therefore, we believe that any compromising of other intelligence activities would be avoided, as would any problem of our relationships with individual nations in which there are now located detection stations.

The Arms Control and Disarmament Agency would like to have whatever appropriate information on our detection and identification capabilities can be made public available as soon as possible. It would also be useful in hearings before Congressional committees that will take place within the next week or two. The information contained in it should be gauged against public statements on a "theoretical capability" made in the recent hearing before the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy. Since we have already told the Soviets what we can do "theoretically" and since they know we are doing it practically, the declassification appears to be in the national interest.

I understand that Mr. Foster discussed this in general terms with you before he left on a brief speaking trip.



Adrian S. Fisher  
Acting Director

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